

The Cheerful Letter

Every place a church; every day the Lord's day; all events blessings; all joy thanksgiving; and all nature and life full of Good.—James Freeman Clarke.

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LITTLE RIVERS

Condensed from the book of the same title by

HENRY VAN DYKE

For real company and friendship, there is nothing outside of the animal kingdom that is comparable to a river. It has a life, a character, a voice of its own, and it is full of good fellowship. It can talk in various tones, loud or low, and of many subjects, grave and gay. Under favorable circumstances it will even make shift to sing. Yes, a river is the most companionable of all inanimate things.

I will admit that a very good case can be made out in favor of the sea or the mountains. But, after all, love of the sea is a disquieting passion, lacking in comfort and mutual confidence. The sea is too big for loving and too uncertain. It will not fit into our thoughts. The mountain, on the other hand, is voiceless and imperturbable; and its very loftiness sometimes makes us the more lonely.

Trees seem to come closer to our life. They are often rooted in our richest feelings; and our sweetest memories, like birds, build nests in their branches. But when I invite a friend with me to share my orisons, or wander alone to indulge the luxury of unlaborious thought, my feet turn not to a tree, but to the bank of a river, for there the musings of solitude find a friendly accompaniment, and human intercourse is purified by the murmuring water. It is by a river that I would choose to make love, and to revive old friendships, to play with the children, to escape from vain, selfish desires, and to cleanse my mind from all the false and foolish things that mar the joy of living.

The life of a river, like that of a hu-

man being, consists in the union of soul and body, the water and the banks. They belong together. The stream molds and makes the shore; hollowing out a bay here, building a point there; alluring the little bushes close to its side, and bending the tall slim trees over its current. The shore guides and controls the stream; now bending it in a hundred sinuous curves, and now speeding it straight as a wild bee on its homeward flight; here hiding the water in a deep cleft overhung with branches, and there spreading it out like a mirror to reflect the sky and the clouds.

Every river that flows has something worthy to be loved. But those that we love most are the ones we have known best—the stream that ran before our father's door, the current on which we ventured our first boat or on whose banks we first picked the twinflower of young love. It is with rivers as it is with people: the greatest are not always the most agreeable. You can imagine much better company for a walking trip than Napoleon Bonaparte. I am all for the little rivers.

And if an open fire is, as has been said, the eye of a room, then surely a little river may be called the mouth, the most expressive feature, of a landscape. It animates and enlivens the whole scene. Even a railway journey becomes tolerable when the track follows the course of a running stream. Here is a mill with its dripping, lazy wheel, the type of somnolent industry; and there is a white cascade, foaming in silent pantomime as the train clatters by; and here is a long, still pool with the cows standing knee-deep in the water and swinging their tails in calm indifference to the passing world.

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Little rivers seem to have the indefinable quality that belongs to certain people in the world—the faculty of exciting interest by their very presence and way of doing things. The most fascinating part of a city or town is that through which the water flows. Idlers always choose a bridge for their place of meditation when they can get it; and, failing that, you will find them sitting on the edge of a quay or embankment, with their feet hanging over the water. But the real way to know a little river is not to glance at it here or there in the course of a hasty journey, nor to become acquainted with it after it has been partly spoiled by too close contact with the works of man. You must go to its native haunts; and you must follow its meanderings whithersoever they may lead you.

It is essential that you must be glad to be led; you must take the little river for guide, philosopher and friend. For it can show you, better than any other teacher, how nature works her enchantments with color and music. As evening draws near, and the air is full of filmy insects out for their last dance, the voice of the little river becomes louder and more distinct. In this mystical hour you will hear the most celestial and entrancing of all bird-notes, the songs of the thrushes—the hermit, the woodthrush, and the veery. Sometimes, but not often, you will see the singer as he pours his whole heart into a long liquid chant, the clear notes rising and falling, echoing in endless curves of sound.

But it is not only to the life of the birds and flowers that the little rivers in-

troduce you. They lead you often into familiarity with human nature in undress, rejoicing in the liberty of old clothes, or of none at all. And since men's "little ways" are usually more interesting than their grand manners, off guard they frequently show to better advantage than when they are on parade. The very best thing of Charles Darwin's that I know is a bit from a letter to his wife: "At last I fell asleep," he wrote, "on the grass, and awoke with a chorus of birds singing around me, and squirrels running up the tree, and some woodpeckers laughing; and it was as pleasant and rural a scene as ever I saw; and I did not care one penny how any of the birds or beasts had been formed."

It is not required of every man and woman to be or to do something great; most of us must content ourselves with taking small parts in the chorus. Even those who have greatness thrust upon them will do well to lay the burden down now and then, and congratulate themselves that they are not altogether answerable for the conduct of the universe. There is such a thing as taking ourselves and the world too seriously. Half of the unrest of modern society comes from the vain idea that every man is bound to be a critic of life, and to let no day pass without finding some fault with the general order of things, or projecting some plan for its improvement. And the other half comes from the greedy notion that a man's life consists in the things that he possesses, and that it is somehow more respectable and pious to be always at work making a larger living, than it is to lie on your back beside the still waters and thank God that you are alive.

Little rivers have small responsibilities. They are not expected to supply a hundred thousand horsepower to a monstrous town. It is enough if they run a harmless, amiable course, and keep the groves and fields green along their banks. When you set out to explore one of these minor streams in your canoe, you have no intention of epoch-making discoveries, or thrilling adventures. You float plac-

idly down the water with no loftier ambition than to reach a good camp ground before dark and to pass the intervening hours pleasantly. It is an agreeable mood for one who has done his fair share of work in the world; and there is none, perhaps, in which the human spirit appears to more advantage in the sight of Heaven.

PETUNIAS NEED SOME ATTENTION

Petunias may seem to be as easy a plant to grow and requiring as little attention as any, but there are certain things that even these simple plants must have to keep them growing and in good condition.

No plant will exist by itself, scarcely in a garden, bloom and keep right on the job without a little assistance from some one. But you ask me what that service to the petunias can be. Well, petunias that have bloomed require the seeds removed or else the stems get too covered with these and dry up. Then they should be nipped. Ends nipped all through the summer to keep the plants where they belong. If this is not done some grow long and leggy and others fall all over the other plants and the bed looks spotty. Care is of great importance even with these easy plants.

Sometimes a judicious tucking of ends into the soil will cover bare spots and make the beds more neat and trim. This act is layering. Covering part of the stems so they will root in. Often in windy spots, the plants are blown from their positions and this tends to pull on the roots, unless you are there to place small stakes to keep them in place.

Pansies at this time require a bit of pruning, as it were, for the ends have made 10, 12 perhaps even greater growth than that, and so those long ends should be nipped back to the base of the plant. By September when we need some of the more dainty things for the house, then the pansies will again be in good condition. Perhaps a little food worked in about the soil

near these plants would be greatly appreciated for only by feeding them can we expect good sized blooms.

One lady who owns a garden, thinks that purely by scattering seeds on the soil, she can have plants, and blossoms for picking. Even seeds scattered carefully will come up in bunches. You may try to scatter these far apart, but even so a certain amount of care must be given to space those plants and transplant to given distances. Nor is that all, for plants require a certain amount of cultivation to give blooms. Loosening the soil to air it, etc.

—*Mary F. Colburn in Boston Globe.*

JUST A FEW WORDS

Just a few words, but they blinded

The brightness all out of a day;

Just a few words, but they lifted

The shadows and cast them away.

Oh, the pain of the wounds

Of the hardened words' sting;

Oh, the balm and the brightness

That kind ones will bring.

Only a frown, but it dampened

The cheer of a dear little heart;

Only a smile, but its sweetness

Checked tears that were ready to start.

Oh, the frowns, how they chill;

Oh, the smiles, how they lure,—

One to smite, one to raise,

One to kill, one to cure.

Oh, that the rules of our living

More like the golden might be;

Much, oh, so much more of sunshine

Would go out from you and from me.

Less profession, more truth,

In our everyday life;

More justice, then surely

Lighter hearts and less strife.

Far better, far kinder, we all mean to be,

But there's lack in the thinking of both
you and me.

—*Georgiana Nourse.*

In the good old days the youngsters didn't have to go to the seashore to get tanned.

CORRESPONDENTS AND APPEALS

MRS. JOHN A. MCCADDIN, *Chairman*, 21 Ashfield Street, Roslindale, Mass.

A correspondent writing to the Exchange for the first time should always give as reference the name and address of her minister.

When a correspondent moves to a new address, notice should be sent to Headquarters, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., and to those persons who have been sending letters and reading matter.

It is necessary to state positively that the Cheerful Letter Exchange is not a "clothing bureau" and not a "charitable" society in the usual sense of the word.

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of its magazine by addressing letters asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who disobeys this rule will be dropped from the list, and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by the Central Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to the Chairman of this Department.

Many people do care for just the kind of friendly service for which we are organized. We limit our efforts to them and their wishes.

APPEALS

1. Mrs. Gladys Iles, Rt. 2, Tolar, Tex., would appreciate any kind of needle work such as embroidery, quilt scraps or silk scraps to make pillows. She has been married three months and lives on a farm seven miles from town.

2. I live in the mountains with my mother and two-year-old boy, and get very lonesome while my husband is away. I would like quilt pieces, embroidery, crochet for myself, and pictures and cards for the baby. Mrs. Mazie E. Greer, R.F.D. 1, Box 50, Rugby, Va.

3. Mrs. Earl Coffey, Rt. 1, Box 141, Amherst, Va., writes that both she and her husband have been in the hospital and would welcome a little cheer, or any kind of sewing, reading matter or quilt pieces.

4. I am awfully thankful for the *Cheerful Letter* magazine that has been sent me for so long. I would appreciate some quilt pieces, bits of embroidery thread, reading or just anything to pass off the time. I have four boys and three girls who would like good books or magazines. We farm, so can have plenty to eat, but can't get any work to buy other things. We have a large crop this year, but it is pretty dry here now. Mrs. J. R.

Sturgill, Sturgills, N. C.

5. Mrs. Fleta L. Smith, R.F.D. 2, Ridgeway, Va., lives in the mountains and can't get to church, as it is too far for her to walk, and she has no way to ride. She would be glad to have Sunday School literature for the children and books of sermons or song books for herself.

6. I am taking this way to thank all of you for the past favors, as they certainly have been a great help. Postage is scarce with me, but thought I would write to let you know I haven't forgotten you. I have quit piecing quilts and making rugs, as it is injurious to my eyes. I should like bits of ribbon and lace, also thread and designs to work by. I am 83 years old, but enjoy doing easy work. Mrs. Frank Taylor, Midway St., Vinton, Va., c/o R. G. Fulcher.

7. I am a boy, 17 years old, and have finished the seventh grade and want to go to high school this fall, but my parents are not able to send me. If I can work this summer to buy some clothes, I can work my way through. I would be so glad of any help such as pencils, paper, etc. Edgar Bennett, Buffalo Ridge, Va.

8. It has been a long time since I have heard from any of the *Cheerful Letter* friends. My husband is not able to do much of the farm work. I have seven girls and three boys. I enjoy embroidery, plain sewing, bits of thread. My oldest daughters are fond of reading and would like the *True Story* magazine. Mrs. Joe Freeman, Spencer, Va.

9. Mrs. Ruby Ashley, Bina, N. C., is a young married woman, 20 years old. Her husband works in the saw mill and leaves home about six o'clock in the morning and doesn't get home till seven at night. She lives in the Phoenix Mountains, and gets very lonely. She would like reading matter or scrap work.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Mrs. Earl Coffey from Rt. 2, Sandhides, Va., to Rt. 1, Box 141, Amherst, Va.

Mrs. Eva Turner from Dodson, Va., to Box 13, Buffalo Ridge, Va.

Mrs. Audie Starkes from Melakoff to R.F.D. 2, Montalba, Texas, c/o J. H. Stafford.

A DREAM OF HEAVEN

There is a semi-humorous story of a man who died and went to heaven. He found himself in a house with a number of other people who had been living in heaven for some time. He was shocked at their appearance—they were little more than skin-and-skeleton, as if they had eaten nothing for months; and they dragged themselves about weakly with a starved look in their eyes. When it came mealtime, the man received another shock. An angel came and strapped a great long spoon to his arm—so long that the handle reached all the way up to his shoulder. It was strapped and locked to his arm, so that he could not bend his elbow. Other angels did the same for his hungry comrades; and then a huge bowl of soup was set down in the center of the room, chicken soup that smelled with a fragrance that was heavenly and delicious. Every one gathered about the bowl, and the air was filled with sobbing and groans, for

no one could feed himself. The man grew frantic as he felt hungrier and hungrier. The soup grew cold, and two angels came in and carried it away. The spoons were removed from every arm. This did not seem like heaven.

The man decided that he would go out for a walk. He wondered if this really was heaven. When he got outside, he met other people. They were strong and healthy-looking, with a fine color in their cheeks; solid, vigorous folk, who looked as if they had eaten well. One of them came over to the new arrival, asking him why he looked so sad, and the new man explained his troubles. A smile came over the face of the old inhabitant, as he replied, "Oh, you will learn—we have good food here in heaven." The new man replied, "But do you have those terrible long spoons strapped to your arms?" "Oh yes," said the old inhabitant, "but we solved that over in our house. You see, *we feed each other in heaven.*"

That seems to me a true picture of heaven—a place where people feed each other. Our selfishness is so very stupid—we do not get along so well when we think only of ourselves. Our lives are so starved and sad when we give no thought to our neighbor's need. Jesus came to teach us heaven on earth—"bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ."—Rev. A. W. Clark.

IF YOU SMILE!

By AGNES CARR

Life is not an easy pathway
And the days are sometimes long,
And we meet along the highway
Grief to seal away our song;
But you'll find that every mile
Is much brighter if you smile.
Life is not a smooth, clear highway,
Where the days are always bright,
Hills are high and skies are so gray,
That we seek in vain for light;
But you'll find that all the while
Life is sweeter if you smile!

—Boston Traveler.

GREAT THOUGHTS FROM THE RELIGIONS OF MANKIND

How Religion Came to Mankind

This is an introductory word to a series of articles on "Great Thoughts from the Religions of Mankind." By understanding other religions we better understand our own. The articles will largely be made up of sayings taken from Confucianism, Buddhism, Brahmanism, Judaism and Christianity. Perhaps a word as to how religion came to mankind may be in order at the start.

The primal needs of primitive men were for material blessings, but there were others that could not be left to go unsatisfied.

How fascinating it is to think of what probably went on in the lives of primitive men who lived in pre-historic times! How significant the analogy that as the qualities and characteristics of mature life are prefigured in the lives of children so are the larger traits and qualities of mankind prefigured in the childhood of the Human Race! How startling the belief that our individual lives are a vital part of all that has happened throughout recorded and un-recorded history.

Primitive man found himself in a world panorama of unspeakable reality, beauty, wonder and glory. His puny strength was as nothing in the presence of enemies of all kinds that threatened his life and to him the invisible forces were as apt to be unfriendly as friendly; a panorama that had both its stern and gentle aspects; a panorama that was to be his first but not his last teacher.

Thus human life had everything to grow up to and to grow into, and this is the background of the different religions that have appeared, from time to time, in various parts of the world, including Christianity. What is true of religion is also true of the other institutions of our day—Education, Government, Science, Poetry and Literature.

We have music because man is by nature a lover of harmony. We have art, poetry and literature because man is by nature a lover of the beautiful, the poeti-

cal and the literary. We have education and religion because man by nature is intelligent, emotional and devout. Man is not intelligent because we have schools or religious because we have churches. We have schools because man's nature demands education and we have churches because man's nature demands religion. We have education and schools for training the mind and religion and churches for training the spirit.

Our true life is found not only in our relationship to the visible world about us or in our relationship to each other, but supremely our true life is found in our relationship to the unseen and eternal world that lies just beyond our sight and understanding.

Our search for more life, more truth, more justice and more love is a search for the Ultimate Reality and our search for the Ultimate Reality is none other than the search for the living God. "My soul thirsteth for the living God." Those who have spoken the language of faith have been our greatest benefactors.

—Frederic W. Smith.

THE EVERLASTING ARMS

The Eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.
Deut. 33:27

Beneath the surface of the tossing sea

The hidden depths unruffled lie, and still;

So, underneath life's turmoil and its cares,

That oft with fear our trembling spirits fill,

Lie hidden depths of quietness and peace—

The Everlasting Arms, where all is still!

Lord, help us, when our hearts are sorely tried,

To find this rest—by bowing to Thy will!

—Elizabeth R. Bouret.

All service ranks the same with God; there is no last nor first. — Robert Browning.

MME. CURIE DIES, HER DAUGHTER CARRIES ON

"I was born in Poland. I married Pierre Curie, and I have two daughters. I have done my work in France." In these twenty-one words Marie Sklodowska Curie once summarized her biography. When she died in a sanitarium near Sallanches, Upper Savoy, France, last week, one of those daughters, Mme. Irene Curie-Joliot, was carrying on her parents' work in radioactivity. They derived radioactivity from matter. The famous daughter of two illustrious scientists, with her husband, has derived radioactivity artificially.

Thirty-six years ago Mme. Curie and her husband achieved enduring fame when they were able to announce, after two years of endless but intelligent drudgery, that radioactivity is a fundamental property of matter. Out of their work came the new concept of evolving matter. Thus opened the golden age of science and a new school of thought in which her daughter leads.

Mme. Curie's death, at sixty-six, from pernicious anemia, was hastened by the effects of accumulated radiations in constant research into the nature and properties of radium.

In 1896, Henri Becquerel, Mme. Curie's teacher at the Sorbonne, discovered, by working with uranium, the existence of radioactivity. Searching for other radioactive material, the Curies, after long and tedious experiments, discovered that pitchblende was more active than radium. Mme. Curie decided to go further. She wanted to find what substance in pitchblende produced a ray which would pass through anything except lead and steel.

At that time pitchblende was obtainable only from a deposit in Bohemia. Mme. Curie reduced tons of it until she isolated two tremendously energetic substances. These she called polonium (after her native land) and radium.

When the Nobel prize for physics was awarded to Becquerel and the Curies in 1903, the husband of the foremost

woman scientist outlined his wife's great share in the work.

"Mme. Curie," he said, "proved in 1898 that of many of the chemical substances, those which contained uranium or thorium alone were capable of emitting, in notable quantities, Becquerel rays. . . . Mme. Curie studied the minerals which had in them uranium or thorium, and found these minerals were radioactive. In her experiments she found that some of them were more active than they would have been had they contained only uranium or thorium. Mme. Curie then made the hypothesis that these substances contained radioactive chemicals as yet unknown. Mme. Curie executed these experimental works and reached her momentous conclusion alone."

In 1911, however, when, five years after her husband's death, she went to Stockholm to receive the only second award of the Nobel prize, she said:

"First, I wish to recall that the discovery of radium was made by Pierre Curie in conjunction with me. We also owe to Pierre Curie fundamental experiments in the domain of radioactivity. The chemical work which had for its end the isolation of radium was my special work."

Now the gifted daughter of a really great mother is in the front rank of radiologists of three nations who have created substance out of a void. By bombarding lithium with alpha particles the two Curie-Joliot obtained positive electrons. The important fact they discovered was that the disintegration continued for many minutes after the bombardment stopped. Scientists say they have gone one step closer to solving the mystery of matter.

Honors were heaped upon Mme. Curie, yet she was indifferent to them. Today her monument stands in Paris. It is the Curie Laboratory at the Radium Institute of the University of Paris. Here her daughter and son-in-law are continuing along the way opened by the parents.

—*Literary Digest.*

NAKED IN THE JUNGLE

Felipe was playing with an attacking jaguar when George A. Moreno first saw him.

The young Mayan Indian held a deer-skin as a shield, and, with this insecure protection, carrying no weapon save an eight-inch dagger, he killed the great cat in the very act of leaping over him.

The following year Felipe became Mr. Moreno's "man," and since then the two have scrambled over the world for oil, and run into such a series of adventures as would raise the hair on any man's head. To be robbed by men of their own breed and left naked in the jungle was part of their lot. They escaped, and Felipe gets the credit. He harnessed the jungle to his needs—forced the jungle to save them both from its own threat. And the funny part of this particular adventure—singled out from many—is that its climax came in a revolver holster in New York.

The two of them, Mr. Moreno, who tells the story in *The American Magazine*, and Felipe, were down in the jungle in Nicaragua, battling their way up the Rio Escondido in a frail canoe. Moreno was desperately ill. They had run across a party of engineers, and he had made the almost fatal mistake of dining too well. Felipe managed the little bark with a ten-foot pole, shooting rapid after rapid until—a sudden turn in the river and they were in another rapids, a wild swirl of water that engulfed them, smashed the canoe on the rocks, and sent Moreno to the bottom at the foot of the fall.

Felipe dived and got him out. Both were stark naked, having stript because of the heat, and everything was at the bottom of the river except the machete which Felipe always carried strapped to his waist. Mr. Moreno recalled once seeing the body of a naked man who had been bitten to death by mosquitoes. They had come, he thought, to the end of the trail. Some day, perhaps, some one would find what the mosquitoes had left of them.

But, said the Mayan Indian, "the

jungle man does not perish in the jungle."

Wading to shore, he found a flint and, returning, struck a spark from it with his machete. He showed his master how to heat rocks and drop them into the pools of water formed in the cavities in the boulder on which they had been stranded. Then he left to get food. Moreno waited and boiled water, and, he continues:

It was three hours before Felipe came back with a load of treasure—yucca roots, heart of palm, both of which would serve as vegetables and bread; a plentiful supply of an herb called yanten, which makes a very palatable tea, and which is also a remedy for stomach disorders, and a prize—a three-foot iguana! This huge lizard has delicate and delicious flesh.

By now I was ravenous. We skinned and butchered the iguana, cut up the yucca and palmetto, and in one of our "rock pots" we made stew, which I kept boiling with hot stones. In the second "pot" we brewed yanten tea. While I tended fire and cooked, Felipe carefully washed the intestine of the iguana and tied one end of it to a tree branch almost over our heads, and also tied a stone to the lower end. The tying was done with vegetable fiber; tough running vines were plentiful.

We ate, and, much refreshed and strengthened, I obeyed Felipe and rested, while he went to the shore and came back with huge armfuls of platanillo leaves. These come from a palm much like the banana palm. The leaf, eight or nine feet long and about two feet wide, is very smooth, has a waxy surface, and a stem runs its entire length. Felipe picked fiber from this stem, and with the fiber began to lace the leaves together. Six leaves made a blanket big enough for both of us. When he had finished he turned to me:

"Patron, we can sleep under this and no mosquito or dew can touch us."

I felt so much better as I viewed that blanket that Felipe allowed me to help make a small lean-to on our boulder—

saplings bound together with vines and covered with the same huge leaves that were our life insurance. That night I was more comfortable than I had been for a week.

For three days we lived in this condition, and then, both well and rested, we started to improve upon it. The iguana gut was well dried. I was set to rubbing it with fat from the iguana which we had saved for the purpose, and after some hard work I got it pliable. We now had a tough string some eight feet long. With it, Felipe lashed his machete to a six-foot pole, and our puny knife was now a spear, over which Felipe beamed. On the fourth day he went to hunt, returning with a tepezquintle, a sort of possum. We roasted a part of it, made soup of a part, and carefully spread the skin to dry.

For a week we worked on that skin. When at last it was soft and pliable, Felipe, using his machete, cut a spiral in it until the skin was in one long strip. It was tough, and we now had a somewhat irregular but flexible bow string. The hard, tough shell of a maquengue palm furnished bow and arrows, and Felipe had those ready. Again he went out to hunt. In four days he brought in six deer and four peccaries.

Robinson Crusoe and his man Friday—yes, with me in the Friday role. Our camp was converted into a tannery and packing plant. We hung the meat, cut into strips, on racks made of saplings. Skins were staked out everywhere, and we both worked over them, rubbing their surfaces with stone and wet ashes. The bulk of the rubbing fell to me, while Felipe hunted for food and meat and skins to equip us for the journey to Fagot's. Once the skins were dry and soft, we cut the leather into strips, which we wound about our legs in spiral puttees. We cut narrower strips and, using these as laces, made moccasins. Over our heads we slipped tunics, laced at the sides.

Six weeks later the two men marched from their boulder. They were completely drest in skins and carried

extra clothing. From their shoulders hung a plentiful supply of dried meat. Water they carried in bottles made of the bladders of deer tied with dried gut. They were armed with strong bows and arrows.

(To be concluded.)

THE HOPE OF THE WORLD

I took a piece of plastic clay
And idly fashioned it one day,
And as my fingers pressed it still,
It moved and yielded to my will.

I came again when days were past—
The bit of clay was hard at last,
The form I gave it, it still bore,
But I could change that form no more.

I took a piece of living clay
And gently formed it day by day,
And moulded with my power and art,
A young child's soft and tender heart.

I came again when years were gone—
It was a man I looked upon;
He still that early impress wore.
And I could change him never more.

(Author Unknown)

A PRAYER

Dear God, help us to live the fullness of each day. Let us be grateful for the happiness that it brings. Help us endure its sorrows. Let us awake each morn with a song in our hearts, and grant our voice strength to give it music. Teach us to be silent when we feel wrathful or resentful. Show us the value of a kindly word, the warmth of a smile. Keep watch over hearts lest any thought of malice enter there. Guard our words that we may not speak ill of others. Help us each time that we see another's fault, to acknowledge one to our own account. Make us just, and help us keep faith with humanity, that we may live in peace and pleasure with our associates, contented in the wonder and simplicity of an all-wise plan. Amen.

Contributed by Beulah E. Lamb, a shut-in of more than twenty years.

WITH OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

AN OLD-TIME CROW STORY FROM
SKILLIGALLEE

FRANCES MARGARET FOX

About seventy years ago, in a far corner of our land, there lived a happy family of children. They were the seven children of three islands in the Mackinac country. Their true home, where they lived in the winter, was in their father's house on Mackinac Island in the Strait of Mackinac. Their sugar camp, where in the springtime they lived in their own log cabin, was on Bois Blanc Island, at the head of Lake Huron. But their summer home was in Uncle Sam's lighthouse on the rock of Skilligallee, at the top of wild Lake Michigan.

So, on a fair day in many a springtime, that father of long ago sailed away from his lighthouse home at the top of Lake Michigan, northeast, into the wide blue Strait of Mackinac, the thirty-five miles to Mackinac Island. There he gathered his happy family into the sailboat, with all their special treasures, and away they sailed, with song and laughter, to Skilligallee. Few children in the wide world have ever had so beautiful a childhood as those long-ago Davenport boys and girls.

Their summer island was tiny, like a three-acre garden, in the shape of a triangle, with the three points stretching far into the water. Since that time, Uncle Sam has made great changes on the rock. But in those days it was a fair-sized green island, on which wildflowers and a few trees were growing and hundreds of birds were singing.

In the lighthouse, as it used to be, there was one room that the Davenport children always called the "Big Room." In it was a fireplace. To keep that fireplace bright and cheerful, the family used to sail over to Cross Village for loads of firewood. There, too, they used to pick wild fruits, strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, and huckleberries.

Every three or four weeks the father and mother used to sail home to Macki-

nac Island for supplies. The father would get the groceries, and the mother used to go shopping along the little main street for whatever the children needed. While they were away, the eldest son, the assistant, was in full charge of the lighthouse. His brothers and sisters helped and obeyed him.

From dawn until sunset, through many a lovely summer day, the children played in the house, under the trees, and on the beach. Of course they could swim, and row boats, and go fishing. They fared forth on picnics, too, sometimes sailing as far away as the Beaver Islands. In the evenings the little ones gathered with their mother in the Big Room, and played games, and told stories, and had beautiful times.

These children had many pets. One, that has been most lovingly remembered for seventy years, was Jack Crow. They found him at Cross Village when he was young and took him home to Skilligallee in the sailboat. Jack was helpless at first, because he was so young he could neither fly nor feed himself. He was given such wonderful care that he grew fast, and he behaved in his suit of glossy black feathers as if he were a fun-loving little brother.

Wherever the children went, there was Jack. He had perfect wings, but usually went walking around the tiny island with the boys and girls. He played with them, too, and tried to talk with them. He had a way of saying, "Caw-caw-caw!" that was most entrancing.

On summer afternoons the mother used to take her sewing out under the trees where she could be with the children and enjoy their merry fun. At such times Jack Crow used to play a game of his own which might have been called "Steal-and-hide-it" for that bird was full of mischief. He would walk up to Mrs. Davenport and talk with her, in his own fashion, and then steal something and run or fly away with it. He used to watch his chance and snatch a spool, and away

he would go! Usually he buried whatever he stole in the beach sand.

The mother would say, "Watch him, children, and see where he hides the spool!"

The laughing children then watched their pet dig a hole in the sand and bury the trinket. Then, while he was prancing about, merrily shouting "Caw-caw-caw," they would run and dig up the treasure.

Now all this was a game which day after day the children and their mother played and enjoyed with Jack Crow. They never blamed him for stealing and hiding their belongings, not even when his love of mischief caused him trouble.

Jack Crow had a chance to hear all about right and wrong, and how to be good, because every Sunday afternoon the gentle mother gathered her little flock in a circle and read to them from the Big Book. The two pet gulls, those great beauties that roosted every night with the chickens, never attended these Sunday meetings, but Jack Crow was always there. He seemed like one of the family and usually behaved well on Sundays.

Of course, he sometimes made the children laugh at the wrong time. Sometimes when the mother was talking solemnly about what a dreadful thing it is to tell a lie, or about some other sin, Jack would cock his head on one side and then on the other, and look at her as if he would like to say something, and the children just had to laugh.

But one day a sad thing happened on the rock of Skilligallee. The eldest son, the big boy who was his father's assistant, was going away in the sailboat for a little vacation on the mainland. His mother had washed and ironed his best white shirt and had laid out all his clean clothes, ready to put on. The shirt she had left on the desk where the big boy used to do his writing.

Now it happened that one of the little boys went into that room to look for something. He was in a great hurry and so tipped over the ink bottle. Before he

could pick it up, there were rivers and pools of ink on big brother's best white shirt.

The little boy was scared. He sat on the bottom one of the four steps leading into the lighthouse tower and wondered what to do. He had never been so unhappy in his life.

In flew dear old Jack Crow. The little brother knew then what he would do. He would keep still and let Jack Crow take the blame for the spilled ink. He was so ashamed of the thought that he couldn't look the innocent bird in the eye.

Not long after that the big brother went to his room to dress up. Jack Crow didn't even think of keeping out of sight. When the big boy blamed him for spoiling his best shirt, Jack Crow put his head on one side and said "Caw-caw-caw" ever so pleasantly.

When the family assembled and were all talking sorrowfully about Jack Crow, an old Indian came to beg a ride to the mainland in the sailboat. He had never liked Jack Crow. When he was told that the pet had emptied an ink bottle on the assistant lightkeeper's best shirt, he said, "Me shoot him!"

Of course the children would not listen to that, but after a long talk it was decided by Father and Mother that Jack Crow must be taken to Cross Village in the sailboat and left in the woods to care for himself evermore. They said it was hard to tell what bad mischief the bird might do next.

All this time one little boy was fairly sick with grief. But even so he was not brave enough to say, right then and there, that it was he who had spilled the ink. Neither would he go in the sailboat when Jack Crow, cawing and cawing, happily as usual, sailed away to Cross Village.

Just before it was time to start back to the lighthouse, the weeping children watched the Indian carry their pet far back in the woods. Their eyes were blinded with tears when the Indian came running toward the beach, empty-handed. Then all piled into the sailboat

and, with a favoring breeze, away they sailed from the shore, leaving Jack Crow behind.

Meantime, at the lighthouse, a broken-hearted little boy had told his mother about that bottle of ink. He owned up that he was the guilty one and had sent away the best friend in feathers that he ever had, the beloved, innocent crow. He cried like a girl.

The mother felt sorry for her boy, but there was little she could say to comfort him, because of course neither one of them ever expected to see their dear old pet again.

At last she went to a window and looked toward the mainland. The sailboat was coming, nearer, nearer, and nearer. Suddenly the mother called her penitent little boy. Her voice was so

full of joy that he ran to the window and looked where she pointed. What he saw was too good to be true. Jack Crow was clinging for his life to the top of a tall mast and merrily sailing home to Skilligallee.

It must be that the Indian didn't explain to the bird that he was supposed to stay in the woods. Anyway, it was not long after the children set sail before they were laughing through their tears, for on swift wings Jack Crow had come flying over the water to alight on the tallest mast of the sailboat. It was plain that Jack Crow had a mind of his own. He probably had a light heart, too, for he had wronged no one.

"Caw, caw, caw-caw!"

—*The Christian Register.*

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE

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